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Progress, gaps and lessons learned from the Strategy and Business Plan, 2000-2003

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I. Introduction

1. This review of progress and gaps in implementing the UNIFEM Strategy and Business Plan, 2000-2003, focuses on two questions:

(a) To what extent has UNIFEM achieved the five goals in its the Strategy and Business Plan, 2000-2003?

(b) What has UNIFEM learned about the strategies and partnerships, its comparative advantage, and changes needed in organizational effectiveness to perform better in its next the Strategy and Business Plan – now called the multi-year funding framework (MYFF)?

2. The paper highlights key strategies and provides illustrative examples that contributed to progress on achieving the goals that UNIFEM set out in its Strategy and Business Plan. It sets out examples that represent 'benchmarks' for UNIFEM, which encompass a confluence of strategies and partnerships to offer guidelines for future practice. It identifies gaps and lessons that have emerged from various reviews undertaken during the Strategy and Business Plan.

The five goals guiding the Strategy and Business Plan, 2000-2003

(a) Increase options and opportunities for women, especially those living in poverty, through focused programming in three areas: economic security and rights; engendering governance, peace and security; promoting women's human rights and eliminating violence against women

(b) Strengthen United Nations system capacity to support women's empowerment and gender equality in policies and programmes

(c) Strengthen UNIFEM effectiveness by incorporating the principles of a learning organization and building strategic partnerships

(d) Ensure UNIFEM personnel, financial and programme management systems support the goals and programmes of the organization effectively and efficiently

(e) Build a larger and more diversified resource base.

The five strategies guiding the Strategy and Business Plan, 2000-2003

(a) Advocacy and policy dialogue to strengthen the enabling environment for gender equality;

(b) Building partnerships between government, civil society and United Nations organizations in support of women's empowerment;

(c) Capacity building of women's organizations and networks;

(d) Piloting innovative initiatives to generate lessons for up-scaling;

(e) Building a knowledge base on effective strategies for gender mainstreaming.

3. In crafting the UNIFEM MYFF, 2004-2007, the organization used a variety of methods, assessments and learning opportunities to identify progress, gaps and

lessons in implementing its Strategy and Business Plan. Each of the UNIFEM 15 subregional offices undertook a cumulative assessment of progress over a four-year period, using the revised results and indicators framework that the organization developed. Cross-regional assessments of programming on peace and security, gender budgets, HIV/AIDS, ending violence against women, supporting women's access to information and communication technologies (ICT), engendering trade agreements, and a multi-stakeholder assessment in Rwanda yielded valuable information and opportunities to engage with a wide range of partners. Finally, an internal review of administrative, financial and ICT infrastructure, staff surveys, and pilot assessments of two subregional offices provided insights into structure, management and administration.

II. Context

4. The goal of achieving gender equality and women's empowerment represents commitments made by Member States over the past two decades at United Nations world conferences and in the Millennium Declaration, as well as by the 175 Member States that have ratified the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The plans of action that all regions and the majority of countries have to achieve gender equality or confront specific gender discrimination ground these commitments in local realities. Yet progress has been uneven.

5. The Strategy and Business Plan, 2000-2003, was formulated as governments worldwide were preparing for the five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action. That review and a number of key documents prepared in the intervening years – particularly the UNIFEM *Progress of the World's Women* and the World Bank *Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals* – have demonstrated that significant advances have been made in creating a stronger enabling environment for gender equality. In many parts of the world, gender inequalities in schooling and health have decreased, though significant gaps persist in some countries. In no region of the developing world are women equal to men in legal, social and economic rights. Gender inequalities in economic opportunities, in vulnerability to family violence, and in power and political voice are widespread in developing and developed countries alike, as noted in the 2003 World Bank publication *Gender Equality and the Millennium Development Goals*. Threats to women's security, likewise, continue unabated. In short, implementation of commitments has lagged behind.

6. Coordination efforts within the United Nations system have also provided an important context for implementation of the Strategy and Business Plan. The Strategy and Business Plan was formulated prior to the strong emphasis currently being placed on the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, prior to Security Council resolution 1325 and a heightened focus on coordinated efforts to achieve peace and security through the multilateral system, and prior to the convergence of United Nations partners around poverty reduction strategies. During the period of the Strategy and Business Plan, these have influenced the focus and substance of UNIFEM programming.

III. Implementing the five goals of the Strategy and Business Plan

Goal 1. Increase options and opportunities for women, especially those living in poverty, through focused programming in three areas: economic security and rights; engendering governance, peace and security; promoting women's human rights and eliminating violence against women, especially in the context of HIV/AIDS

7. In implementing the Strategy and Business Plan, UNIFEM honed in on a limited number of results or changes that it tracked in implementation.

8. At the *outcome level*, UNIFEM explored changes in the enabling environment for gender equality, particularly in policies and legislation. It also identified progress and gaps in the effectiveness of its key partners in influencing changes at the macro, meso and micro level. Outcome level changes result from the efforts of a wide range of partners, so UNIFEM has also tried to build better understanding of its contribution to transformations. In the next MYFF, instituting better measures for tracking changes in effectiveness of partners will be instituted.

9. A notable trend during the lifetime of the Strategy and Business Plan has been a clear movement towards more upstream policy-related work in key strategic areas. UNIFEM has moved beyond its origins as an organization working almost exclusively at the grass-roots level to one which now brings its influence to bear at the highest levels of national, regional and global policy. At the aggregate level, UNIFEM tracked nearly 200 instances in which its support and advocacy resulted in changes in policies, laws, national plans of action for the advancement of women, and high-level commitment to gender equality. Of these, roughly 40 per cent related to women's human rights and ending violence against women, 25 per cent each related to economic security or governance, and about 10 per cent were broad gender equality plans or commitments. These could not have been achieved without increases in effectiveness of partners at all levels.

10. At the *output level*, UNIFEM focused on changes that occurred in knowledge, awareness and capacities of its partners resulting from UNIFEM support and application of its five strategies. Anecdotal evidence and tracking of changes such as statements by policy-makers, formation of new networks and organizations, and other indicators were used to assess progress. Nevertheless, it became clear throughout the process of implementing the Strategy and Business Plan that better systems are needed for tracking change, especially since work on women's rights and gender equality often involves long-term attitudinal changes that are difficult to quantify.

11. At the *aggregate level*, tracking of progress revealed that UNIFEM supported the strengthening or establishment of nearly 300 organizations, networks or units and divisions to promote gender equality in mainstream agencies (both governmental and non-governmental) during the period of the Strategy and Business Plan. Of these, 65 were organizations supported through the Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women and an additional 40 were organizations working on women's human rights issues. The others were roughly equally split between organizations related to women's economic security, those related to governance (including in peace and security programming), and those relating to broad gender equality issues.

12. In implementing the Strategy and Business Plan, UNIFEM moved to a more strategic regional and thematic programme approach, reducing concentration on isolated projects. The average size of programmes increased to $360 000, from $275 000 in the previous three years. Within each of its three thematic areas, UNIFEM highlighted key sub-goals to bring coherence and focus to programmes.

13. *Economic security and rights*. The three sub-goals guiding UNIFEM work were: (a) building understanding of the impact of economic globalization on women; (b) incorporating gender perspectives in economic policy-making; and (c) linking low-income women entrepreneurs, producers and informal sector workers to markets. This has included supporting regional and cross-regional networks of gender-aware economists in Latin America and Africa to advocate for gender-responsive macro-economic policies and trade agreements on a sustainable basis; strengthening legal protection for migrant women and informal sector workers; launching a regional programme on women's land rights; and creating links with the private sector to enhance women's ability to access and influence policies governing ICT. At the global level, two inter-governmental policy processes were prioritised: the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on the Information Society.

14. UNIFEM concentrated on building expertise around two key tools – gender budget analysis and engendering data and statistics – during the period of the Strategy and Business Plan. Work on gender analysis of budgets has been scaled up considerably since UNIFEM initial involvement in Southern Africa in 1997. UNIFEM is supporting gender budget initiatives in 20 countries, after playing a leading role in a high level global meeting on gender budgeting held in Belgium in 2001, attended by representatives from 47 countries.

Accountability for gender equality at municipal levels

In an effort to demonstrate the concrete effects of using gender analysis of budgets as a tool of analysis and accountability in the Andean region, UNIFEM strategy focused its work at the municipal level. In Ecuador, UNIFEM worked with the Municipality of Cuenca whose Vice Mayor is committed to women's rights. The gender budget analysis was launched with a consultative process that involved roundtables between women's organizations, government and other civil society organizations. The results set off a chain reaction to strengthen gender equality in the municipality. On the basis of the gender budget analysis, the municipality allocated resources for gender equity in the 2002 budget that are 15 times the amount allocated in the 2001 budget. The local government developed a municipal plan for equal opportunity, and a gender unit was set up in the Government. A municipal by-law for the prevention of violence against women was developed with support from the national Inter-Institutional Network to Prevent Intra-Family Violence, supported by the UNIFEM Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. The Cuenca experience has been showcased at national, regional and international venues and is documented on numerous web sites. Building on this experience, UNIFEM has supported local level gender budgets in Salitre, Ecuador and in Cochabamba, Bolivia, using tools developed through the Cuenca experience.

15. National commitment to the MDGs and to tracking progress toward gender equality as a key component have also led UNIFEM to focus on building capacity and partnerships to gender data and statistics. For instance, many years of UNIFEM advocacy in Mexico, in partnership with the National Statistics, Geography and Informatics Institute (INEGI) and the Institute of Women, contributed to the creation of a national statistical system (SISESIM) that monitors the implementation of national programmes for equal opportunities and the advancement of women. Data provided by SISESIM on school drop out and completion rates among boys and girls that showed gender disparities led the Government anti-poverty programme to provide larger school grants for girls. UNIFEM and its partners are now linking SISESIM experience to statistics offices throughout Central America.

Accounting for women's work in South Asia

In South Asia, UNIFEM involvement in gendering census exercises demonstrates that many years of effort are required to generate sustainable change and broad-based constituencies. UNIFEM supported the process of mainstreaming gender in the census exercise in partnership with governments, United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) starting from 1991 up to the 2001 in India, Nepal and Pakistan. UNIFEM provided technical support in the pre- and post-census phases. Through the initiative, gender training for senior officials, master trainers, and enumerators was undertaken, with a focus on revamping data collection on female work participation rates. Advocacy campaigns were undertaken to sensitize the general public. UNIFEM facilitated learning between statistics offices in India and Nepal. The result of these efforts has been greater visibility of women's work. Recording of female work participation rates in the 2001 census in India have risen by 3 per cent (approximately 36 million women) and in Nepal by 10 per cent. The national statistics and census offices in India and Nepal gather better data on women's contributions through market and non-market work. Sri Lanka has expressed interest in replicating this process. The shift in the understanding of NGOs and widespread United Nations partnerships have the potential to generate sustainable practices and policies to guide data gathering in a way that is gender-responsive and will lead to more gender equitable policies.

16. *Gendering governance, peace and security*. UNIFEM work on this theme has transformed significantly with much greater focus on peace and security issues than envisioned at the time that the Strategy and Business Plan was developed. Work is guided by two sub-goals: (a) achieving gender justice by strengthening electoral, constitutional, legislative and judicial processes, making them gender-responsive; and (b) gendering crisis prevention and recovery, especially in peace processes and reconstruction efforts.

17. The central role that UNIFEM played, along with its partners, in advocating for the passage of Security Council resolution 1325 is described in the UNIFEM MYFF (DP/2004/5) in paragraph 78. Security Council resolution 1325 stimulated wide-ranging action and commitment at all levels, from more contact by Security Council Members with women's groups when they go on missions to broad-based advocacy campaigns on resolution 1325 by grass-roots groups worldwide. Greater opportunity

and demand, along with support from donors, has enabled UNIFEM to strengthen the depth and breadth of efforts to mainstream gender in United Nations system activities in more than 20 post-conflict areas, including Afghanistan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Great Lakes region in Africa, Guatemala, Kosovo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the southern Caucasus and Timor-Leste.

18. Efforts have also emphasized gendering constitutional processes and enhancing women's participation as candidates and voters in every region. A key focus has been to ensure that constitutions incorporate CEDAW, including in Afghanistan, Kenya, Morocco and Rwanda.

Equality between men and women in Afghanistan

The *Loya Jirga* in Afghanistan in December 2003 enshrined equality between men and women in the country's constitution. This is an achievement that required broad-based alliances and ongoing advocacy, a process in which UNIFEM and many of its national and international partners played a key role.

UNIFEM multi-faceted programme in Afghanistan focuses on gender justice and economic security and rights, with a strong emphasis on supporting newly emerging institutions of government and civil society to build gender-responsive policies and programmes[1]. Key achievements have included the establishment of five Women's Development Centres (WDCs) in Ghazni, Hirat, Parwan, Kandahar and Logar and four centres for internally displaced women in the Shamali Plains. The centres are attracting thousands of women and girls, and offer a venue for training, awareness raising, and mutual support. For instance, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is collaborating with UNIFEM in using the centres to raise awareness among women about upcoming elections and to register women voters. The strategy for the WDCs is being implemented in close collaboration with many donor and national partners, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the German agency for technical cooperation (GTZ), UNDP and the Government of Afghanistan. Other achievements have included concentrated support, in collaboration with UNDP and others, in building the capacity of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) to mainstream gender into the work of other ministries; supporting and linking new NGOs advocating for women's empowerment and rights, including the Afghan Women's Journalist Forum, the Afghan Women's Business Council and a network of Afghan women's NGOs building legal literacy. A high priority has been to facilitate links between women's NGOs and government bodies, including the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Information and Culture.

Recently, UNIFEM has prioritized supporting the Constitutional *Loya Jirga* (CLJ) process to incorporate gender equality and women's rights. UNIFEM worked closely with UNAMA, UNDP and NGOs to support the development and implementation of a training curriculum for women members of the CLJ. UNIFEM staff also participated as official monitors of provincial elections of women to the CLJ. UNIFEM also supported NGOs in raising awareness among women throughout Afghanistan about the CLJ process. UNIFEM supported the establishment of a

[1] UNIFEM multi-donor programme in Afghanistan is supported by the Governments of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Government of Japan via the United Nations Human Security Fund.

Gender and Law Working Group – comprised of the Office of the State Minister for Women, MOWA, Supreme Court judges, and women's NGOs – which prepared recommendations for revisions to the draft constitution. Its recommendations were formally submitted to the President, the Constitutional Commission and the media, as well as to women delegates who prioritized the recommendations on women's political participation. With UNIFEM technical support, the women delegates worked together to gather the required 150 signatures to amend Article 83 of the constitution, which stipulates that at least two women per province should be elected to the Lower House.

At the request of UNAMA, UNIFEM seconded three of its staff members to the Constitutional Commission to heighten support for women delegates to the *Loya Jirga*. UNIFEM also brought an expert in *shari'a* law and women's rights from the Arab region to Afghanistan in the lead up to and during the CLJ who was able to provide on-the-spot, continuous guidance on interpretations of women's rights consistent with Islamic principles.

19. Initiatives on promoting women's human rights and eliminating violence against women, especially in the context of HIV/AIDS, have also expanded significantly in depth and breadth in the period of the last the Strategy and Business Plan. The sub-goals guiding work included: Assisting in effective implementation of CEDAW; eliminating violence against women through enhanced prevention, protection and advocacy strategies; and highlighting the gender and human rights dimensions of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Increased global recognition of the centrality of gender equality to HIV/AIDS strategies has fuelled programming, supported by a strong partnership with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and involvement of UNIFEM staff in inter-agency thematic groups on HIV/AIDS in nearly every country in which UNIFEM is present. At the global level, the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on HIV/AIDS and its follow-up, as well as partnerships on CEDAW with the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and the CEDAW Committee were key to UNIFEM support and advocacy in this area.

20. Some important conceptual shifts in UNIFEM programming occurred during the period of the Strategy and Business Plan. Rather than view promotion of women's human rights as a separate thematic area, UNIFEM increasingly sought to mainstream human rights – and particularly promotion and implementation of CEDAW – in all of its thematic areas. Additionally, UNIFEM has developed regional strategies to promote more coordinated action on CEDAW in the Pacific, West Africa, Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Arab States, and Central and Eastern Europe. Work on ending violence against women has taken on new dimensions as well with a stronger incorporation of this dimension in UNIFEM work on crisis prevention and post-conflict reconstruction. More intensified efforts to take stock of progress and formulate improved strategies and partnerships to end gender-based violence have also characterized the past four years. For instance, UNIFEM global scan of progress on ending violence against women, undertaken in 2002 revealed that more than 45 countries now have legislation related to domestic violence and nearly all countries in Southeast Asia and Latin America have national plans to address violence against women. Yet violence continues unabated. Moving from

laws and policies to implementation of commitments is essential to sustaining progress in this area.

Building advocacy strategies and capacity to reduce violence against women in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

In the late 1990s, UNIFEM launched inter-agency regional campaigns to end violence against women in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, and Africa. In the CIS region, guided by a small and new UNIFEM office, campaign activities were delayed until 2001 to allow for lessons to emerge from UNIFEM campaigns in other regions. Planning began in 2001 and by 2002 a public information campaign was launched to cover 9 countries in the region. Learning from gaps in the other campaigns, stronger mechanisms to track changes in awareness and attitudes and build linkages to ongoing programming were put in place. Evidence of a 14 to 24 per cent increase in awareness about domestic violence in parts of the Russian Federation was recorded. Comparable data on violence against women was gathered from the nine countries. Reviews of laws and policies on domestic violence were undertaken and efforts are in place in almost all of the nine countries to draft and introduce domestic violence legislation. National task forces were established in each country, some of which are continuing the work inspired through the campaigns. Finally, the campaigns established an infrastructure and knowledge networks to support UNIFEM follow-up work on a regional replication of the Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.

Goal 2: Strengthened partnerships with United Nations agencies to support women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes

21. United Nations reform was a key influencing factor in UNIFEM activities toward this goal. In response to the emphasis on simplification and harmonization, UNIFEM gave priority focus to the CCA/UNDAF and MDGs. Increased joint United Nations action on peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction through integrated planning and programming provided significant opportunities to gender United Nations responses in numerous countries (see above). UNIFEM ability to execute projects for UNDP, as approved by the Executive Board in its decision 2000/7, provided more concrete and substantive opportunities and resources for involvement in the early stages of programming on the ground. Inter-agency mechanisms – like the Inter-Agency Network for Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) and the United Nations Development Group in New York and inter-agency thematic groups at the field level – provided venues through which to develop shared goals and results.

22. There have been over 200 distinct partnerships with United Nations organizations on concrete initiatives (from one-off events to longer-term projects), input into more than 40 CCA/UNDAF exercises, and more than 20 memoranda of understanding and executing agency agreements signed during the last Strategy and Business Plan. UNIFEM involvement in MDG processes increased significantly in 2002 and 2003, in close collaboration with UNDP in Cambodia and Kazakhstan,

with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Latin America and the Caribbean, and through the execution of a UNDP cross-regional project on gender and the MDGs. More substantive engagement with the poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP) exercises in Africa also began to emerge. UNIFEM executed nearly $5 million in projects for other United Nations organizations. In 2002, UNDP reported that more than half of its 90 offices that reported gender equality programming also reported partnerships with UNIFEM. Memoranda of understanding with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), joint publications with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and increasing numbers of partnerships with the World Bank have contributed to stronger gender equality programming in distinct countries or regions. Memoranda of understanding with UNAIDS and UNFPA have been among the strongest that UNIFEM has had, with joint programming in nearly every region. UNAIDS and UNFPA have matched their commitment to cooperation with financial contributions to facilitate UNIFEM technical assistance.

23. Nevertheless, there remain significant challenges in moving from partnerships to sustained action on gender equality by United Nations system partners.

24. UNIFEM and other gender equality advocates have invested their limited resources on providing technical advice to gender programmes and projects, CCA/UNDAF and MDG exercises on the ground, and standards for CCA/UNDAF and MDG processes. Yet experience still shows that even where gender is mainstreamed into documents and reporting processes, implementation and follow-up too often neglect gender equality commitments.

25. During the Strategy and Business Plan – and in view of limited resources – UNIFEM prioritized CCA/UNDAF and MDG processes, and focused less on other coordination mechanisms, like poverty reduction strategies. A stronger focus on engaging with PRSP processes has been built into the next MYFF.

26. In the field, UNIFEM chaired or co-chaired 15 inter-agency gender thematic groups throughout the Strategy and Business Plan period and provided technical assistance to at least seven additional groups. Inter-agency thematic groups on gender are second in number only to those on HIV/AIDS at the field level. But UNIFEM/UNDP assessments and reporting from UNIFEM staff indicate that these groups fact the challenge of multiple demands with inadequate resources or links to decision-makers. UNIFEM is currently coordinating an inter-agency initiative focused on enhancing support to inter-agency thematic groups on gender.

27. The tools and processes of United Nations reform in the field are designed, primarily, for United Nations organizations with country programmes. UNIFEM has a limited number of sub-regional offices rather than country programmes, which creates challenges to its ability to influence United Nations country team coordination. Below is an example of one way that the United Nations system has responded.

From CCA/UNDAF to strengthening gender mainstreaming in the United Nations country team in the Philippines

In response to the United Nations call to mainstream gender equality in country programming through the CCA/UNDAF, the United Nations country team in the Philippines conceived the project Assessment, Strategy Setting and Monitoring and Evaluation of the Gender Dimensions of UNDP and the United Nations Country Team Programming. The expected outcome of the project was the full implementation of gender mainstreaming by the United Nations country team in its programming cycle by 2005, the target year for harmonization of United Nations programmes in the Philippines. The United Nations country team requested UNIFEM (through its sub-regional programme office in Bangkok), in partnership with the UNDAF Gender Working Group (GWG) to execute the project and provide technical assistance to the United Nations country team.

A project evaluation was undertaken to assess results. The evaluation noted that, over 13 months, the project strengthened the GWG, a technical working group on gender for UNDP and a Staff Association/GAD Task Force for the United Nations system. Gender tools and instruments, including a rights-based gender analytical framework and rights-based gender assessment guide, now provide a common frame of reference for advocacy and action across all United Nations organizations. The project also produced an HIV/AIDS and gender framework, and parameters for mainstreaming gender in the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and UNAIDS proposal assessment processes. It launched an on-line resource – Think GAD! It's Friday! – to provide practical and innovative examples of gender mainstreaming on a regular basis. The project was successful in linking internal and external constituencies for gender equality, including building partnerships between United Nations organizations and women's networks, which expand the base of support for ongoing work on gender mainstreaming. UNIFEM technical assistance was one of the five key factors that the evaluators found as having a positive impact on the project results by providing "a clear vision, an integrated strategy that promoted sustainability, and effective leadership" (from the evaluation). The evaluation also noted that while UNIFEM does not have an office or sustained presence in the Philippines it is important for the partnership to continue with the United Nations country team in identifying on a regular basis the kind of technical support it will need from UNIFEM.

Goal 3. Strengthening UNIFEM effectiveness through strategic partnerships and incorporating the principles of a learning organization

28. UNIFEM effectiveness is dependent on its ability to inspire and influence others to upscale and mainstream innovation and commitments in support of gender equality. A multi-dimensional range of partnerships is essential. The Strategy and Business Plan identified UNIFEM core partners as governments, civil society organizations (especially women's organizations and networks), and United Nations system organizations. At its most effective, the Fund links these constituencies to build sustainable partnerships and knowledge networks at the country and regional levels that will continue beyond UNIFEM involvement and support.

29. In the course of the Strategy and Business Plan, UNIFEM tracked three areas related to this Goal: the extent to which it expanded networks of strategic partners to generate concrete benefits toward gender equality; how UNIFEM programmes built on systematic learning to change and improve their approaches; how knowledge generated through UNIFEM and its partners created opportunities for leveraging greater resources and commitment to gender equality.

30. UNIFEM made progress in all of the result areas identified. Through more selective programming, it developed close ties with national AIDS councils and faith-based groups in its work on HIV/AIDS; with ministries of finance, parliamentarians, and local municipalities in its work on gender-budgeting; with universities, statistics units, and research centres in its work on influencing economic policies; with the media, judiciary and law enforcement, and ministries of health in its work on ending violence against women; with the private sector in its work on linking women producers to markets. It facilitated dialogue and links between women's networks and all of these groups, for instance between HIV-positive women and national AIDS councils; between women's organizations and the judiciary; between widows involved in small-scale production in post-conflict countries and entrepreneurs; between grantees of the Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and donors; between women parliamentarians and grass-roots groups. These partnerships contributed to its ability to facilitate knowledge networks in key th_matic areas, including on gender budgets and MDGs.

31. UNIFEM partnerships with regional bodies are important in all areas of work and have grown throughout the Strategy and Business Plan. Its partnerships with United Nations regional economic commissions are central to efforts to ensure a gender dimension in MDG monitoring. Partnerships with many regional bodies, from the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to the Southern Common Market Agreement (MERCOSUR), have focused on mainstreaming gender in economic policies, trade agreements; and engendering peace agreements and post-conflict reconstruction strategies.

Learning about gender mainstreaming to support policies and programmes of African regional institutions:

UNIFEM support to the process of mainstreaming gender in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) structures in the early 1990s generated lessons that have provided a good basis for developing strategic partnerships with other African regional institutions. In the past the Strategy and Business Plan, UNIFEM supported the creation of a Women's Desk in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to mainstream gender into its policy and planning processes. IGAD commitment to implement Security Council resolution 1325 has been an important accountability tool used by UNIFEM to support the organization to facilitate women's participation in the Somali Peace process, and to pay attention to the memoranda prepared by women from South and North Sudan to influence their country's peace process. UNIFEM is also supporting a gender expert in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which has led to the development of a policy endorsed by all of the Ministers of Women's Affairs in the subregion in September 2003. In December 2003, the 27th session of the Commission of Heads of State and Governm:nt endorsed the establishment of a

Gender Division in the ECOWAS secretariat and the restructuring of the West African Women's Association into the ECOWAS Gender and Development Centre.

32. Enhancing the quality of programming through better systems to support learning took a high priority in the Strategy and Business Plan. At its mid-point, the Fund developed an Innovation and Learning Unit, with support from the Department for International Development of the Government of the United Kingdom. This unit was instrumental in facilitating a stronger results framework to guide programming, development of an internal knowledge sharing strategy, and more systematic and participatory approaches to monitoring and evaluation. Over twenty assessments and evaluations undertaken during the last the Strategy and Business Plan period informed UNIFEM programming. These included thematic assessments, programme and project evaluations, and multi-stakeholder/donor assessments.

33. UNIFEM biennial publication, *Progress of the World's Women,* launched in collaboration with UNFPA, regularly assesses progress toward gender equality in line with the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and the MDGs. The first two editions of *Progress* (2000 and 2002) were influential both internally and externally. *Progress* has stimulated replication at regional and national levels, including publication of *Progress of South Asian Women*, of Mongolian women, and editions to be published in Brazil and in the Arab region. Greater UNIFEM involvement in gender budget initiatives was a direct result of the useful analysis and priorities set out in *Progress 2000.* And *Progress 2002* – with one volume highlighting the Independent Expert Assessment on Women, Peace and Security and the other focused on the gender dimensions of the MDGs – has been launched in all regions, with volume one receiving broad-based media attention worldwide, and volume two providing a firm basis for strengthened programming on MDGs at the country level.

34. UNIFEM ability to influence and leverage high-level commitment to gender equality – such as its work on Security Council resolution 1325,or its participation in heads of agency groups at the country level – is linked to its work as a knowledge provider. UNIFEM tracked nearly 50 instances in which governments, United Nations organizations or large NGOs replicated or scaled up the innovative efforts that the Fund supports. International media coverage that highlighted UNIFEM contributions and perspectives doubled between 2001 and 2003. UNIFEM electronic resources and web sites continue to act as a hub for knowledge generation and dissemination, with its recently launched web site on gender and MDGs – which it spearheaded as part of a collaboration with the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE), the World Bank, and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – noted as one of the five most visited electronic resources on gender on the Global Development Gateway and with 13 000 hits on its women, peace and security portal in its first two months. There were also a growing number of instances in which partners supported by UNIFEM were able to leverage additional and larger support due to UNIFEM seed funding.

Goal 4. Ensure UNIFEM personnel, financial and programme management systems support the goals/programmes of the organization effectively and efficiently &&&

35. In line with other United Nations organizations, UNIFEM has emphasized streamlining and strengthening management systems to facilitate results-based management. There were three areas of concrete progress: (a) advances in clarifying administrative arrangements with UNDP; (b) streamlining and strengthening of financial management systems; and (c) improving information technology infrastructure.

36. As one of three associated funds of UNDP, developing greater clarity and a stronger partnership with UNDP on administrative arrangements was a high priority during the Strategy and Business Plan. Good progress has been made in updating the operational guidelines that spell out areas of authority and responsibility between UNDP and UNIFEM for administrative matters in New York and the field. These will be finalized in the first quarter of 2004 and also include mechanisms to expedite and improve recruitment and career development. UNIFEM has also worked closely with the Associate Administrator and many UNDP bureaux to develop a draft strategy for strengthening programmatic links between UNDP and UNIFEM, building on Executive Board requests.

37. Significant progress was made in streamlining and strengthening financial management. UNIFEM is dependent on UNDP corporate systems for financial management, which presented challenges because of incompatibility between different aspects of the system. During the Strategy and Business Plan, UNIFEM developed its own in-house adaptations to generate significant time savings in administrative processes and also to produce more accurate and regular financial monitoring reports for section managers and field staff to increase their understanding and accountability. At the same time, learning from past experience, UNDP has included UNIFEM from the beginning in the design phase of the PeopleSoft Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. The system will address the inadequate connection between administrative systems in the field and headquarters by introducing an integrated, comprehensive, and web-based system as well as real-time connectivity.

38. The significant technical challenges that UNIFEM confronted in the previous the Strategy and Business Plan with regard to developing an intranet were overcome in the Strategy and Business Plan 2000-2003, with UNIFEM now having its own fully functioning intranet to facilitate sharing of both administrative and programmatic information. Staff – and particularly those in the field – have commented on the extent to which this saves time and increases effectiveness by making project documents, programming guidelines, and many other knowledge resources immediately available.

39. Efforts to decentralize management and administrative responsibilities to regional programme offices have stalled and will be a high priority for the next the Strategy and Business Plan, as will continued work on clarifying the partnership with UNDP vis-à-vis administrative and financial systems. The introduction of ERP will respond to this, but to maximize the potential benefits of ERP, UNIFEM will need to invest up front in staff training and planning for 2004 and 2005.

Goal 5. Build a larger and more diversified resource base

40. The UNIFEM MYFF, 2004-2007, (paragraphs 47-50) provides ample detail on progress achieved in enlarging UNIFEM resource base during the Strategy and Business Plan, 2000-2003, as compared to the previous business plan period. During the period of the Strategy and Business Plan, UNIFEM regular resources grew by 43 per cent as compared to the previous four years. In 2001, UNIFEM passed the $20 million mark in core resources for the first time. Increases in contributions to core resources from the Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom helped to boost support from other key donors. Cost-sharing resources grew by 89 per cent, largely as a result of contributions to UNIFEM work on peace and security (particularly in Afghanistan), HIV/AIDS and gender budgets. More than 90 per cent of UNIFEM funds come from bilateral donors. At the same time, UNIFEM is strengthening its capacity to secure or leverage funds from other types of partnerships, particularly through execution of projects for other United Nations organizations in areas of clear comparative advantage and through partnerships with the private sector.

41. Diversity in UNIFEM resource base pertains to the number and types of donors, as well as the types of arrangements with donors. UNIFEM was fortunate to have a multi-year commitment to core resources through an institutional strategy paper established with DFID in 2000-2003. This is the type of agreement that UNIFEM is exploring with other bilateral donors as well, given the positive experience with DFID. These agreements increase dependability, facilitate better planning and save time. It is hoped that bilateral donors will use the MYFF, 2004-2007, to make multi-year commitments to UNIFEM based on shared goals and results. Furthermore, in the upcoming period, greater emphasis will be placed on further leveraging revenue for gender equality generated through project execution for other United Nations organizations (only where UNIFEM has a comparative advantage) and through concentrated efforts to build on successful partnerships with private foundations and private sector groups.

IV. Progress and gaps in organizational effectiveness

42. Thematic reviews, programme and project evaluations, organizational assessments and stakeholder consultations undertaken during the Strategy and Business Plan have pointed to a select set of challenges that UNIFEM needs to confront and which form the basis of the framework for organizational effectiveness (annex II of MYFF). These include achieving greater coherence and sustainability in programming; aligning UNIFEM capacities with demands and opportunities, and a more strategic approach to partnerships. Below is a brief overview of findings from numerous evaluations, highlighting programme strategies in which UNIFEM has demonstrated unique strengths. For each of these, as well, reviews have identified associated lessons and gaps that need to be addressed.

Innovator and catalytic role

43. *Strengths*. Reviews have substantiated that UNIFEM spearheads initiatives within the community of multi-lateral organizations to raise attention to gender dimensions of mainstream issues. Examples include its support for ending violence against women and advocating for stronger recognition of women's contributions and leadership to gender peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction in the early 1990s, as well as its advocacy on incorporating gender and human rights dimensions into HIV/AIDS strategies beginning in 1998. Working in partnership with networks of gender equality advocates in the United Nations system, in governments and in civil society is crucial to UNIFEM ability to build an evidence base and sustained advocacy to convince mainstream organizations and decision-makers to address the gender equality dimensions of key development challenges. The extent to which the gender equality and women's rights dimensions of these issues have gained legitimacy – for instance, the emergence of gender equality on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council – is evidence of the value of UNIFEM innovative efforts in partnership with many organizations and networks.

44. *Challenges*. Sustainability emerges as the key challenge to UNIFEM innovative and catalytic actions. Reviews of programming to mainstream gender equality into budgeting processes, to address gender-based violence, and to strengthen the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS highlight that insufficient investment by mainstream actors – whether governments or mainstream development agencies – continues to limit the extent to which innovation is upscaled to influence mainstream policy and practice. Partners in a number of evaluations noted that UNIFEM was effective as a catalyst in putting issues on their agenda and in providing initial support for new areas of work. However, as a network of research institutes in India noted, they were inspired by UNIFEM to develop a research agenda around gender and HIV/AIDS, but were unable to find other sources of support, and UNIFEM staff and resources were too limited to sustain the work they hoped to undertake.

45. The link between being an innovator and catalyst needs to be strengthened. Lessons learned from UNIFEM support to innovation need to provide a firm basis for its activities as a catalyst. Evaluations and assessments have pointed out that UNIFEM needs to invest more in documenting innovation to ensure that the processes and capacities required to upscale these are easily accessible. Recommendations also point to the need to invest more in making these visible in mainstream. In response, UNIFEM will strengthen its capacity to document and disseminate innovation and lessons in the upcoming MYFF.

Advocacy and policy dialogue

46. *Strengths*. Partners in many of the evaluations and reviews undertaken have noted that UNIFEM presence is central to putting gender equality on policy and programming agendas, whether at national and regional levels, in the United Nations or in other venues. As noted above, UNIFEM tracked more than 200 instances in which its advocacy activities and partnerships resulted in enhanced commitments, policies and laws in support of gender equality. These range from strengthening protective legislation (as an example, for migrant women in Jordan),

to influencing policies of large public sector employers (like the Indian Railways) or mainstream ministries (such as the Ministry of Agrarian Reform in Brazil), to successfully advocating for gender equality provisions in new constitutions (as in Timor-Leste or Afghanistan). It also includes influencing United Nations inter-agency or individual level programmes, as it did in Somalia by presenting evidence that strengthened the gender equality dimensions of the UNDP Rule of Law and Security project.

47. *Challenges.* Coherence is highlighted as being a key challenge for UNIFEM advocacy work. Evaluations have highlighted that UNIFEM advocacy strategies have been effective at the level of broad-based messages about the importance of gender equality in relation to specific themes. There was less clarity about its advocacy message and policy advice with regard to concrete, actionable responses. A different level of advocacy and policy guidance is necessary to secure the institutional and individual changes needed to – for instance – reduce stigma and discrimination against HIV-positive women or gender-based violence. Also, evaluations noted that there were too many disparate advocacy messages. Stronger and more consistent use of evidence-based advocacy and policy advice organized around a select number of key areas, backed by research, and oriented toward specific audiences is needed. In the next four years, UNIFEM will be more selective in the number of areas around which it engages.

Capacity-building

48. *Strengths.* Building national and local capacity and ownership cuts across all UNIFEM initiatives. UNIFEM supports capacity-building for grass-roots groups and gender equality advocates to strengthen their ability to influence mainstream policies and programmes. It also invests in building capacity of mainstream actors at the policy and programme level to understand and implement gender equality commitments better. It is the area of service that UNIFEM is most often called on to provide. Throughout the period of the Strategy and Business Plan, UNIFEM has linked its capacity-building initiatives to a number of new constituencies: e.g., national AIDS councils, staff in ministries of finance and planning, statistics office personnel, peacekeepers, and faith-based groups as well as continued work with the media, judiciary and law enforcement. Many success stories have emerged, including the adoption of a training manual on gender and HIV/AIDS developed through a pilot initiative by universities in Thailand, Canada and other countries to a significant increase in interest in the gender-dimensions of national budgets by ministries of finance.

49. *Challenges.* The main challenge related to UNIFEM involvement in capacity-building concerns the breadth of themes covered. Reviews recommended that UNIFEM generate a broader array of tools – guidelines, case studies, training manuals – for a more limited number of thematic areas. UNIFEM launching of web portals on a small number of themes (HIV/AIDS, peace and security, MDGs) during the Strategy and Business Plan is a response to this, seeking to map existing capacity-building tools, documentation and initiatives and to provide better guidance on existing expertise.

Strategic Partnerships

50. *Strengths*. UNIFEM expanded and strengthened its partnerships during the Strategy and Business Plan. Women's networks, organizations, gender units, and national machineries for the advancement of women and Parliamentarians continue to be key allies and partners in its work. In the United Nations system, more effective use of memoranda of understanding and executing agency arrangements have strengthened partnerships in its key thematic areas, particularly with UNDP, UNFPA and UNAIDS. There is growing collaboration with the World Bank around gender budgeting and MDGs in the field and in headquarters.

51. Evaluations consistently revealed that the most highly valued aspect of partnership with UNIFEM was its flexibility, its ability to convene and bridge diverse constituencies, the legitimacy it brings as a United Nations organization promoting gender equality, and the quality of the partnership. HIV-positive women's networks in Kenya and India, for instance, noted the importance of UNIFEM efforts to facilitate their closer working relationships with local governments and mainstream women's networks. National partners – particularly women's organizations - noted that UNIFEM supported *their* agenda, rather than imposing its own, and was unique amongst assistance agencies in this regard. A key partner interviewed for an evaluation on UNIFEM peace and security programming noted that the partnership with UNIFEM was characterized by "respect for each other's roles...aiming to build a partnership rather than a donor-implementing relationship".

52. *Challenges*. A key challenge is devising more effective strategies for building alliances and knowledge *across* knowledge and action networks so that wide ranging and multi-disciplinary constituencies join together in support of gender equality and women's rights.

53. Evaluations identified the importance of strategically identifying non-traditional partners that can expand influence and transformation of the mainstream. The evaluation of work on gender budgets, for instance, points to the value of developing stronger linkages between gender budget advocacy and groups working on pro-poor participatory budgeting. The review of work on ending violence against women highlighted the critical nature of strengthening partnerships with men's organizations. Many reviews have highlighted the need to have a more consistent way of partnering with research institutes and universities.

54. Within the United Nations, findings on UNIFEM partnership are somewhat contradictory. There is a high demand for UNIFEM expertise, with many commendations for UNIFEM advocacy role at the country, regional and global levels. Partnerships in support of joint advocacy strategies – such as those that UNIFEM spearheaded with UNDP, UNFPA and others around ending violence against women – have had proven effectiveness and results. Yet there continues to be an expectation from some United Nations organizations and United Nations country teams that UNIFEM partnership should provide ongoing gender analysis training and comments on project documents, whereas UNIFEM has stressed the importance of building internal gender expertise for these services. A number of United Nations organization are surprised that UNIFEM will not fund gender experts for them. In part, this may be responsible for one United Nations partner organization interviewed noting that UNIFEM is unable to 'pay to play', owing to its small size and budget, and that this limits the partnership potential.

55. UNIFEM ultimate effectiveness is dependent on strategic partnerships and networks within and outside of the United Nations system. Dedicated effort to expanding and strengthening its partnership strategy is a high priority in the next MYFF, as is further work in clarifying UNIFEM role with its United Nations partners.

Results-based programming

56. *Strengths*. Significant strides in results-based programming characterized the MYFF period. Based on regular analysis of six-month reports from regional programme offices and UNIFEM sections and regular strategic planning, UNIFEM streamlined its results framework; developed a close link between results reporting, evaluation and learning; revised its project document format, and began development of an electronic module on rights-based, results-based programming which should be finalized by June 2004. The publication of *Progress of the World's Women* and the launch of an innovation and learning unit were both enabling factors in UNIFEM efforts to better track results at all levels. Periodic meetings with UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA to compare and learn from each other's efforts in results-based management have also been helpful given their capacity to invest larger resources in training and tracking.

57. *Challenges*. Gender equality is a long-term project. Measuring progress with regard to fundamental changes in attitudes and practices at the individual and institutional levels – at the root of sustainable change toward gender equality – is essential, though this can be hampered by the expense of using existing methods and by the need for methods of measurement that have yet to be developed. UNIFEM is grappling with this challenge, particularly with a view toward identifying more useful process indicators to generate knowledge and track progress on the 'how to' of achieving gender equality.

58. Furthermore, the commitment to results-based programming has had an effect on programming choices and strategies. Staff report that decisions to work at the municipal level, for instance, have been influenced both by opportunity and the likelihood that results will more quickly emerge through initial piloting than through national or regional initiatives. The designation of three themes for UNIFEM work in the Strategy and Business Plan, 2000-2003, was effective in helping UNIFEM to communicate its priorities and make strategic choices about programmes. But staff reported that the way these were used in the results framework contributed to fragmentation in reporting and conceptualization of programmes. In response, UNIFEM has revised its results and reporting framework for the MYFF, 2004-2007, to enhance cross-thematic and cross-regional programming and tracking of results.